



## The MAMJS Parents' Cyber Smart Code

Dear Parents/Guardians

The MAMJS Parents' Council Committee (PCC), with the full support of the school, are introducing the **Cyber Smart Code ('the Code')**, whereby you, as parents/guardians, are given the opportunity to collectively agree to delay giving your child a smartphone and access to social media, until after they finish junior school.

**The Code** was developed following a survey undertaken by the PCC in October 2023, where a total of **94% of parents/guardians** expressed their support for the implementation of a voluntary no smartphone code. Following your feedback, **The Code** also includes restricting your child's access to social media, until they finish junior school.

As you are aware, the MAMJS Board of Management ratified the 'No mobile phone and electronic devices' policy on 16 October 2023. Under this policy mobile phones, smartphones and electronic devices are no longer permitted in MAMJS.

We fully acknowledge the many benefits associated with technology and digital learning and we support the continued education of students in relation to ICT in preparation for their future. We also appreciate the many challenges technology poses. The **Cyber Smart Code** aims to complement the school policy by extending our ability, as a parent body, to protect our children from the challenges that come from smartphone ownership and social media access.

### Why introduce The Code?

The development of **The Code** has been inspired by the courageous work in several schools in Wicklow, Waterford and an ever-increasing number in Dublin. Removing access to smartphones and social media for primary school children is well on its way to becoming a nationwide norm.

Over the past number of years, concerns have greatly increased around children having unsupervised internet access and the impact of social media. Both parents and teachers alike have voiced their reservations about the increasing levels of anxiety amongst our children which can be directly associated with the impact social media is having on their daily lives.

This is supported by a growing body of research which has clearly demonstrated the detrimental effects of the increased use of smartphones on the developing brain, socially, emotionally and educationally, particularly on children under the age of 14.





## What is the code?

**The Cyber Smart Code**, which is voluntary in nature, means that you, as a parent/guardian, agree not to allow your child to have a smartphone and access to social media, until they finish junior school.

## Aims of The Code

- Improve the emotional, social and educational outcomes for our children, by following relevant, up-to-date research and expert advice on age-appropriate use of technology.
- Relieve the pressure on both parents and children to have a smartphone and access to social media.
- Improve cyber safety awareness and education for parents/guardians.
- **Not to discourage the use of technology**, but to recognise the many benefits of technology and digital learning in a safe and age-appropriate manner.

## How to sign up

If you would like to participate in this collective agreement, please click on the link below and you can sign up to **The Code** by following a few simple steps. The form is anonymous and no personal details will be published or held.

<https://forms.gle/fHvv1EbGAzQX4UkX7>

The aggregate number for the schools and class groups will be collated and used to provide the parent body with details of the percentage of their child's class group that have signed up to **The Code**.

The PCC appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and will continue to work with you, the parents/guardians and everyone in MAMJS towards providing a bright and safe future for all our children.

Please find attached some relevant and informative articles for your consideration.





### **Further Information and Reading**

Primary Schools in Greystones/Delgany introduced the No Smartphone Voluntary Code, followed by 'Gen Free' in primary schools across Waterford which involves a commitment to not give your child a smartphone or access to social media until they have finished primary school. These initiatives have resulted in many schools in Dublin including Carysfort N.S., The Harold, Loreto Dalkey, Holy Cross Dundrum to name just a few, adopting similar codes. Many other local schools to MAMJS are in the parent survey/code drafting stage.

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jun/03/much-easier-to-say-no-irish-town-unites-in-smartphone-ban-for-young-children>

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2023/05/31/stephen-donnely-should-school-smartphone-bans-be-considered-nationwide/>

<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/munster/arid-41206609.html>

